

ECONOMIC VIABILITY/SUSTAINABILITY IDEAS

Final 2/21/06

Desired Future Condition Statement

Tourism, recreation, and the presence of Western State College are major components of a strong and sustainable year-round economy that is maintained through partnerships with local businesses, Western State College, resort operators, and local, state and federal agencies. Anchored by a healthy, vibrant Main Street, the local economy supports the diverse economic and employment needs of local residents and provides a full range of services and goods at competitive prices, reducing residents' need to obtain goods and services out of county.

INSTRUCTIONS: Place your score of 1 to 5 in third column

5=STRONGLY AGREE 4=MOSTLY AGREE 3=NEUTRAL/UNKNOWN 2=MOSTLY DISAGREE 1=STRONGLY DISAGREE

Idea/Potential Policy Statement or Action Item	Comments	Degree of Support
1. Establish an annexation policy that benefits the City by enacting a resolution that defines the expectations and policies of the City.	This was discussed at length at the cc work session. The policy will need to ensure that the City's interests are protected, that the developer pays its own way, and that the process is manageable.	
2. Explore formal cash reserves policies and other mechanisms (bonds, land banking, etc.) to help developers defer infrastructure costs.	Finance Manager Wendy Hanson discussed options such as determining a maximum percentage of the cash reserves that will be used for capital improvements. Another example is a municipal bond.	
3. Re-evaluate the existing utility reimbursement policy which allows initial developers to enter into a 15-year contract with the City. Infrastructure reimbursements are paid to the initial developer by future developers via the City for a \$100 administrative fee.	Recommended by management staff. See Chapter 12, Article 5. Owners of undeveloped properties who benefit from infrastructure installation shall contribute financially upon the development of their properties. This ensures an equitable means of promoting private installation of improvements.	

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4. Explore the establishment of special tax districts in existing developed and undeveloped areas that would generate revenues for the improvement or expansion of infrastructure and other municipal services	Recommended by management staff. Special tax districts include tax increment financing (TIF), federal block grants for urban renewal; and Special Improvement Districts.	
5. Utilize federal and state tax incentives, grants and loan programs for the improvement/expansion of infrastructure and other municipal services.	Recommended by management staff. For example, the CO office of E.D. awarded grants totaling \$500,000 to Fruita to plan & install infrastructure to an obsolete shale oil refinery.	
6. Continue to work collaboratively with WSC to develop strategies for its long term protection and growth enhancement. Continue to assist with funding for capital facility expansions and providing city services necessary for the long-term success of the college.	See Gunnison County Comp Plan for Economic Development, p. 116. An example action statement is: the City's website could have a more developed link to WSC. (Each student contributes approx. \$250,000 to the economy over 4 year time period)	
7. Explore the option of joining with other governmental and economic entities in creating a Gunnison Valley ED Advisory Board that includes governmental officials and planners from up and down valley, the chambers, the college, a ranch representative, and/or other stakeholder(s).	This group would meet regularly to brainstorm ideas and to be an advisory group to existing governments. They could also be a resource to existing and new businesses. The Economic Summit will likely be the catalyst for this option.	
8. Recognize that affordable housing is necessary to accommodate service and professional workers.	This will also be mentioned in the housing chapter in more detail.	
9a. Evaluate the need and actively collaborate with WSC and other local governments to establish an incubator facility for new businesses.	[See Tom Maynard's Memo of 12/29/05.] An incubator facility reduces start up costs, particularly rent to help new businesses become more financially viable.	
9b. Establish infrastructure incentives for an incubator facility.	This was revised at the Planning Commission meeting of February 15 th .	

10. Develop home business rules that provide maximum encourage to businesses that are consistent with the character of their neighborhood.	This was revised at the Planning Commission meeting of February 15 th .	
11a. LDC Update. Evaluate land areas that are most stable for commercial, professional services and industrial uses. Determine appropriate map amendments accordingly.	For example, create a low-impact zoning district, allow transfers of development rights, and allow density bonuses.	
11b. LDC Update. Implement land development codes that promote the economy while protecting community character.	For example, evaluate accessory dwelling units requirements; evaluate flexibility in home occupations;	
11c. LDC Update. Establish an application process that is easy to interpret and implement.		
12. Take a leading role in developing an “Economic Summit” among entities in the valley including CB, Mt CB, CBMR, WSC, tourist service entities (guiding companies), other governmental agencies.	This type of summit has been successful in other areas to increase partnerships and communications among entities. This could also be the beginning point of developing the Strategic Plan.	
13. Work to promote a vibrant and sustainable economy by implementing an Economic Strategic Plan for the Gunnison Valley.	This will take place after the Economic Summit.	
14. Establish the City’s identity as a multi-faceted community that offers recreation and tourism, a great college, and excellent community services.		
15. Understand that heritage tourism provides economic benefits. Provide city resources to help the Gunnison valley develop a strong heritage tourism program.	Expand the role of the City’s historic preservation committee and include the special events coordinator. An action statement could be to “collaborate with other entities to design a five year strategy that will expand and develop cultural and heritage tourism”.	

16. Work with the Chamber and the Arts Center to develop a central information center for heritage tourism.	Other regions have a “Heritage Center”. Develop a half-hour video that runs every hour illustrating our heritage resources.	
17. Support endeavors that promote the City as a hub and gateway community to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison and other adjacent federal/state lands.	The events coordinator could work with entities to develop this.	
18. Encourage strategies that draw people to the CBD. Efforts may include the expansion of alley businesses, expansion of IOOF park, and expand the CBD to the north. Also could encourage a central parking lot location. Other action items are listed in Comments column.	From 1994 Master Plan. Action items will include items such as: (1) ensuring adequate parking in CBD; (2) provide parking for RV’s; (3) Encourage mixed uses in the CBD which would assist in extending hours of operation; (4) Strive to minimize vacancies in CBD; (5) Ensure pedestrian friendly environment; (6) Support & encourage community events. (7) Evaluate and implement methods to eliminate retail sales leakage	
19. Facilitate the goals and objectives of the Economic Development section of the Gunnison County’s Comprehensive Plan.	See Gunnison County Comp Plan, Section VII	
20a. Allow efforts that bring more money into the valley by supporting the creation or expansion of value added businesses.	Examples include the hay pellet plant, local butcher shops (local cows).	

20b. Take a leading role to eliminate the dependency on outside energy providers by supporting business efforts that replace some energy importation.	Work with Forest Service for biomass conversion to useable fuels; develop utility policies that actively encourage individuals and business to convert to local renewable energy resources; investigate the use of low emission coal or coal-bed methane for local energy production; and otherwise actively encourage and support all future efforts to make the city and its inhabitants more locally-sufficient in energy.	
21. Investigate a tax rebate for products manufactured in the City (or County). The City collects 3 percent sales tax; this could be refunded with proof of purchase.	Vendors could “sign up” to qualify. The customer provides a receipt to the City finance office for refunds on purchases with qualified vendors.	
22. Continue to support the local Farmers Market; and determine appropriate incentives and land use changes that would encourage local food production, which can produce local income and replace some food importation.	Some action items could include using portions of City parks for community gardens; provide bldg permit credits for building greenhouses; encourage the transformation of lawn spaces to garden spaces.	
23. Create a master plan for the Van Tuyl property that may include scientific agricultural research, which in turn could attract tourists.	Actions items include research facilities for high altitude grains or new irrigation technologies to be used by CSU Extension Office, Mountain Meadows Research, and Master Gardener’s Program.	
24. Evaluate how boom and bust cycles for coal methane production in the area will affect the City’s economic base.	This was suggested by a citizen at the P&Z meeting on 2/15/06. If a boom occurs, local retailers will need to respond, and housing availability may be reduced.	
25. Be proactive in determining private/public partnerships.	Suggested by a steering committee meeting at the P&Z meeting on 2/16/06 .	
26. Participate with the County regarding the implementation 1041 regulations for large facilities.	Suggested by Steve Westbay at the P&Z meeting on 2/16/06.	

27. Develop a well-designed transportation system that may reduce escalating fuel costs for citizens, which allows local spending otherwise.	Discussed at the 2/16/06 P & Z meeting. This will also be cross referenced in the Transportation chapter.	
28. Create policies that enhance an attractive community and entry corridors, which will help facilitate a vibrant economy.	Policies will be outlined in the community character chapter.	